United Nations A/AC.154/381

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 July 2007

Original: English

Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 23 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

I have the honour to address you in your capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, and to enclose herewith a note verbale dated 20 July 2007 sent to the United States Mission to the United Nations by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations, expressing the latter's grave concern over the attack against one of its officers on 11 July 2007 (see annex).

In this regard, I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Rodolfo **Benítez Verson**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 23 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

[Original: English and Spanish]

New York, 20 July 2007

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and has the honour to inform the latter of an incident involving Enrique Ávila Ojeda, an administrative officer of the Cuban Mission, as described hereunder:

1. On the afternoon of 11 July 2007, Mr. Ávila Ojeda, while fulfilling duties inherent to his post, was on his way back to the Cuban Mission, driving a vehicle with diplomatic plate 087 DCD, belonging to our Mission.

2. While approaching the intersection of 21st Street and 40th Avenue, Queens, New York, Mr. Ávila Ojeda slowed down to stop at a traffic light. At this point, a light grey Honda vehicle drove out of the parking lot of a Pep Boys shop located in that area without waiting for Mr. Ávila to completely clear the parking lot exit.

3. Owing to the recklessness of the driver of the Honda, he hit the rear bumper of the vehicle of the Cuban Mission driven by Mr. Ávila Ojeda. This caused Mr. Ávila Ojeda to stop his vehicle.

4. The driver of the Honda approached Mr. Ávila Ojeda, speaking angrily in English.

5. Mr. Ávila Ojeda, who does not speak English, tried to explain with the few words he knows in that language that they should call the police and reached for his cell phone to report the incident to the Chief Administrative Officer of the Cuban Mission.

6. At this point, the driver of the Honda — taking advantage of the fact that Mr. Ávila Ojeda was inside the vehicle, trying to call the Cuban Mission — punched him in his right eye, leaving him stunned and causing injuries to his right cheekbone and eyebrow.

7. When Mr. Ávila Ojeda recovered from the blow, he saw the driver of the Honda running away.

8. Mr. Ávila Ojeda at all times remained inside his vehicle.

9. Mr. Ávila Ojeda's cell phone call records show that this incident took place at exactly 4.18 p.m.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba would like to express its grave concern over this attack against one of its officers and over the existing insecurity in New York for officials of Permanent Missions accredited to the United Nations.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba urges the authorities of the host country to take the appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of such incidents, which hinder the daily work of the Permanent Missions based in New York.